

July 30, 2010

*In Case You Missed It*

**“Congressman Melancon’s amendment recognizes that the long term solution to cleaning the marshes is to bring self-sustaining health back to this ecosystem through long-term investments in restoration.”** -Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, Environmental Defense Fund, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, National Audubon Society, and National Wildlife Federation

The [Melancon Gulf Coast Restoration Amendment](#) , which passed the House of Representatives Friday, would create a new civil penalty for any oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico of more than 1 million barrels and direct the funding to Gulf restoration projects. The penalty would be \$200 million per 1 million barrels spilled. Recent estimates indicate that up to 5.2 million barrels have leaked into the Gulf as a result of the BP disaster, which would result in a penalty of up to \$1.2 billion dedicated to coastal restoration along the Gulf. The amendment is deficit neutral and comes at no cost to taxpayers or to the federal government.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 30, 2010**



**House Passage of Melancon Amended Bill to Provide \$1.2 Billion for Gulf Restoration Praised**

***Groups say funds would help protect people, wildlife, restore water quality and coastal***

**wetlands resilience**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Five conservation groups praised the U.S. House of Representatives for [passing a bill tonight that includes an amendment](#) authored by Congressman Charlie Melancon (D-La.) that would provide up to \$1.2 billion in funding for Gulf Coast restoration projects. The amendment provides funding for a “Gulf Coast Restoration Program” in Title V of the *Consolidated Land, Energy and Aquatic Resources Act* (CLEAR Act/H.R. 3534). The amendment is fully paid for by a portion of BP’s penalties for violating the Clean Water Act (CWA), so it doesn’t increase the deficit.

**“The BP oil spill has imperiled the Gulf Coast and its impacts will be felt for years to come by the communities, wildlife, and the environment,”** said a joint statement by the [Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana](#)

, [Environmental Defense Fund](#)

, [Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation](#)

, [National Audubon Society](#)

, and

[National Wildlife Federation](#)

**“Much of the oil in the marshes simply can’t be cleaned up. Congressman Melancon’s amendment recognizes that the long term solution to cleaning the marshes is to bring self-sustaining health back to this ecosystem through long-term investments in restoration.**

**“We thank Louisiana Congressmen Melancon and Steve Scalise (R-La.) for working together to ensure bipartisan support for this amendment,”** the groups added. **“We’re also grateful to House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James Oberstar, Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick Rahall (D-WV) and the House leadership for their critically needed help to pass the amendment.”**

HR 3534 creates a restoration task force, comprising the five Gulf Coast governors and representatives of relevant federal agencies. Nine months after the legislation’s enactment into law, the task force must submit a detailed Gulf of Mexico Restoration plan. Upon completion, the plan will be submitted to Congress, which will then fund listed projects. The funded projects will be large-scale restoration projects, endorsed by the Gulf Coast governors and federal agency heads.

**“These projects will benefit all regions of the Gulf Coast and provide a restoration framework that will restore water quality, protect people, wildlife and reintroduce resilience into the coastal wetlands in the face of the oil spill,”** the groups concluded. **“Nearly five years ago, our nation learned during Hurricane Katrina the important role Gulf Coast wetlands play in protecting people and communities from devastating storms.**

**Now, in the face of the BP spill, America has come to understand the importance of a healthy Gulf ecosystem to wildlife, the economy, and the culture of the region.”**

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